



February 16, 2015

**Raised Bill No. 902. AN ACT CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION COVERAGE FOR POLICE OFFICERS AND FIREFIGHTERS WITH POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**

Dear Committee Chairs Larson and Dargan, and members of the Committee on Public Safety and Security:

My name is Traci Cipriano, and I am writing as Director of Professional Affairs for the Connecticut Psychological Association (CPA), **in partial support of Raised Bill No. 902**. Specifically, this bill expands workers' compensation coverage to police officers and fire fighters who develop post-traumatic stress disorder arising out of the "visual witnessing of the death of a human being, or the immediate aftermath of such death" while in the line of duty.

CPA **supports** this expansion of coverage to ensure police officers and fire fighters have access to the treatment they need following exposure to an unforeseen horrific event involving human death while in the line of duty.

CPA **opposes** the requirement that the evaluation and diagnosis be made by a "board certified mental health professional." In psychology, board certification is considered an elective, and while some psychologists elect to pursue this route, the majority of psychologists in Connecticut are not board certified. Assessment and diagnosis are fundamental to the practice of psychology. Licensed psychologists are extensively trained in diagnostic evaluation and assessment, including the use of empirically validated assessment instruments. Doctoral programs, as well as pre-doctoral and post-doctoral training sites, are accredited through periodic comprehensive reviews by the American Psychological Association to ensure the competency of their pre-and post-doctoral trainees. APA accredited training is a requirement for psychologist licensure in Connecticut. Those psychologists who do not attend APA accredited program are subject to individual review to ensure preparedness for licensure.

Statutory language requiring board certification would prevent a majority of Connecticut psychologists from engaging in a task for which they are highly qualified and regularly perform.

CPA asks that the proposed language be changed to allow "licensed psychologists" to diagnose police officers and firefighters who "witness the death of a human being, or the immediate aftermath of such death," while in the line of duty.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Traci Cipriano, PhD".

Traci Cipriano, JD, PhD  
Licensed Clinical Psychologist  
Director of Professional Affairs